

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Pope Francis has declared 2025 to be a Jubilee Year for the entire Church. We are invited to experience in a profound way the transforming power of God's mercy and forgiveness, and a renewal of our faith and commitment to love God and our neighbour as God has first loved us.

The theme for Jubilee 2025 is "Pilgrims of Hope". In our world suffering from the impacts of war, the on-going effects of COVID-19, the climate crisis, economic hardships, and countless afflictions of mind, body and spirit, Pope Francis is inviting us to rekindle the hope which is rooted in our faith: our sure hope which never disappoints.

Part of the Jubilee experience is to make a pilgrimage to sacred places, where prayers is offered, the Sacraments are celebrated, and a plenary indulgence can be obtained for the remission of punishment due to our sins. In our Diocese, I have designated six pilgrimage churches – one in each Deanery, which will welcome pilgrims during the coming year and mark this year with special events. Information about the pilgrimage churches is posted on our Diocesan website.

During the Jubilee Year I invite you to pray especially for those in our communities whose suffering blinds them from seeing the hope of a better future and for those "Heroes of Hope" who are instruments of hope for them in our parishes and local communities.

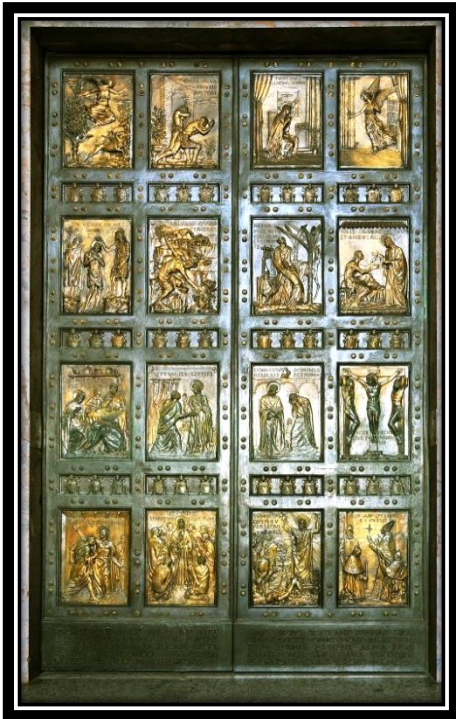
I look forward to walking with you during this Jubilee Year as a fellow Pilgrim of Hope. May the gift of this Jubilee Year renew each of us in our faith; may it rekindle our charity and reawaken in us the blessed hope for the coming of our Saviour Jesus Christ!

Sincerely yours in Christ and Mary Immaculate,

+Douglas Crosby, OMI
(Most Rev.) Douglas Crosby, OMI
Bishop of Hamilton



The Holy Door Panels



During the Jubilee Year 2025, the opening of the Holy Door, particularly at St. Peter's Basilica, is a significant event. Throughout the next couple of months we will continue to learn about the images on the panels. In his homily last weekend, Father Paul reminded us that we have many decisions to make, from choosing a flavour of ice cream to accompanying Jesus in our faith journey. “The decision we make/made this week to accompany Jesus on Holy Thursday — at the Mass of the Institution of the Eucharist and the Priesthood —, Good Friday — at the Way of the Cross and the Liturgy of the Passion and Death —, and at the Easter Vigil and Easter Day Masses — celebrating the Resurrection — are far more important than the flavor of ice cream that caught our attention.”

The 12th panel on the Holy Door, titled “Until the End” in the book “Opening the Holy Doors” by Joan Watson, states that the panel depicts the bold declaration of hope made by Dismas, the “good thief”. We see Jesus with his arms outstretched, equidistant from the two thieves, who are both within his embrace. We are reminded that the decision to turn to God is ours until the very end. We don’t know how much Dismas knows about Jesus. Dismas does not ask to be spared the cross but rather for Jesus to remember him. The Latin inscription reads: “Today you will be with me in paradise”. It is easy to love God when we are comfortable.

We need to remind ourselves that the same is true even when our cross seems too heavy. Dismas reminds us that no sin is too great for God’s forgiveness. As we celebrate the Resurrection at the Easter mass, may our words, actions and lives give praise to God’s goodness and power. Be like Dismas!

